

3

Export Certification
Manual

Special Procedures

Accreditation Programs

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Introduction

These special procedures contain an overview of USDA-APHIS-PPQ accreditation programs established to facilitate the exportation of commodities to foreign markets. Accreditation recognizes consistent levels of competency and confers specific authority. Accrediting trained personnel, organizations, facilities, and processes associated with phytosanitary functions enhances USDA-APHIS-PPQ's ability to protect plant resources and facilitate safe trade.

Direct questions about USDA-APHIS-PPQ accreditation programs to Mr. Michael Ward, National Accreditation Program Manager, by phone at 301-734-5227, by FAX at 301-734-3249, or by e-mail at [<michael.d.ward@aphis.usda.gov>](mailto:michael.d.ward@aphis.usda.gov).

Two accreditation programs initiated by USDA-APHIS-PPQ are as follows:

- ◆ [Accreditation of Authorized Certification Officials](#)
- ◆ [Seed Health Accreditation Program](#)

Accreditation of Authorized Certification Officials

An accreditation program was initiated by USDA-APHIS-PPQ in order to comply with the North American Plant Protection Organization standard for the accreditation of individuals to sign Federal phytosanitary certificates. This ACO accreditation program will ensure that USDA-APHIS-PPQ and our cooperators strictly adhere to current regulations and policies for inspecting and certifying plants and plant products offered for export.

For details about individual responsibilities for obtaining and maintaining accreditation, see USDA-APHIS-PPQ's *ACO Quality Manual* located at the following web site address:

<<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/pim/accreditation>>

Initial Accreditation

ACOs are required to meet education, experience, and training qualifications before becoming accredited to issue Federal plant export certificates. Once all qualifications are met, Export Services grants accreditation and notifies all parties involved. The initial accreditation is valid for 3 years from date of issue. Section One of the *ACO Quality Manual* covers initial accreditation for PPQ officer candidates, while Section Two covers State or county cooperators.

Reaccreditation of ACOs

Before their initial accreditation expires, ACOs **must** be reaccredited. ACOs **must** complete refresher training and successfully pass a renewal exam. Reaccreditation is valid for 3 years from date of issue.

Review Process for Federal Plant Export Certificates

Supervisors of ACOs and Export Certification Specialists (ECSs) are responsible for regularly reviewing issued Federal plant export certificates for compliance with Federal regulations, policies and procedures, foreign import requirements, and USDA-APHIS-PPQ obligations to bilateral agreements, protocols, Memorandums of Understanding, and international standards. Major errors are documented by ECSs and communicated to ACOs and their supervisors to deter recurrences. If within a 12-month period an ACO makes three or more major errors or repeats the same major error after counseling, then that ACO's accreditation will be suspended.

Inactivation and Reactivation of ACOs

ACOs can be placed in an inactive status if they fail to get reaccredited within a three-year period, fail to issue Federal plant export certificates within one year of initial accreditation, or fail to issue Federal plant export certificates within 3 years of initial accreditation or reaccreditation. ECSs place ACOs in the inactive status and notify the ACOs. When placed in an inactive status, ACOs are **not** allowed to issue or sign Federal plant export certificates. ACOs may be reactivated once they complete 60 days of regulatory experience under an active ACO, and refresher training.

Suspension and Reactivation of ACOs

ACOs can be suspended from issuing Federal plant export certificates if they are suspected of knowingly or deliberately signing a fraudulent certificate with any intentional false statement or misrepresentation, or if within a 12-month period they make three or more major errors

or repeat the same major error after counseling. Supervisors, ECSs, or regional export program officials can recommend suspension, while the final determination to suspend an ACO's accreditation lies with the regional export program official. Suspension is for one year. Suspended ACOs can be reactivated once they complete Export Certification Training and successfully pass an exam.

Retesting

If a candidate or ACO fails an exam, then they have up to 45 days to retest. If a candidate or ACO fails a retest, then they have up to 45 days to pass a second retest. If the candidate or ACO fails the second retest, then they **must** complete one year of regulatory experience and retake the appropriate test.

Seed Health Accreditation Program

USDA-APHIS-PPQ in cooperation with the National Seed Health System initiated a process by which nongovernment entities can become accredited to perform the following testing and inspections for plants or plant products that are required for the issuance of Federal plant export certificates:

- ◆ Laboratory seed health testing (laboratory-based program to test seeds for plant pathogens using the standardized methods approved by the National Seed Health System)
- ◆ Phytosanitary field inspection (field-based inspections of seed producing fields, nurseries, or greenhouses for disease freedom using standardized methods approved by the National Seed Health System)
- ◆ Seed sampling for seed health laboratory testing (sampling of seeds using standardized methods approved by the National Seed Health System and forwarded by a traceable method to a government or accredited laboratory to conduct seed health laboratory tests)
- ◆ Visual inspections of seeds for phytosanitary certification (visual inspection of seed shipments using USDA-APHIS-PPQ approved methods at the exporter's facility for insects, weed seeds, soil, and other contaminants before issuing a Federal plant export certificate)

Each nongovernment entity is audited and evaluated by the National Seed Health System under the direct supervision of the National Accreditation Program Manager for USDA-APHIS-PPQ. Upon successful completion of the initial audit and with the approval of

USDA-APHIS-PPQ, the entity becomes accredited. Each entity is accredited to perform certain functions and is listed on a letter of accreditation that is issued by USDA-APHIS-PPQ.

Accredited entities provide a written report of their findings to the Authorized Certification Official (ACO). The written findings become part of the supporting documentation that is attached to the Issuing Office Copy of the Federal plant export certificates. ACOs **cannot** issue Federal plant export certificates for plants or plant products that underwent testing or inspection performed by an accredited entity for which that entity was **not** accredited to perform.

USDA-APHIS-PPQ's National Accreditation Program Manager oversees that accredited entities maintain compliance with the standards as specified in the Code of Federal Regulations through annual audits and proficiency testing. Accreditation is valid for 3 years and can be renewed after a thorough audit is performed by USDA-APHIS-PPQ and the National Seed Health System.

ACOs may accept documented results from the accredited entities for the accredited phytosanitary function(s) listed in **Figure 3-1-1 on page-3-1-5**. These documented results serve to determine eligibility to issue Federal plant export certificates for seeds intended for propagation.

Accredited entities are required to use **only** those tests and methods that are listed in *Reference Manual B* to perform the specified phytosanitary functions for which they are accredited to perform. For more information about these tests and methods, go to the following National Seed Health System web site address:

[<http://excerpt.ceris.purdue.edu/htbin/exleave.com?addr=http://www.seedhealth.org>](http://excerpt.ceris.purdue.edu/htbin/exleave.com?addr=http://www.seedhealth.org)

Accredited Facility Name	Accredited for	Expiration Date
California Seed and Plant Lab 7877 Pleasant Grove Road Elverta, California 95626	See health testing for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pepper and tomato for the pathogen <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>vesicatoria</i> (Ishi vegetables method) ◆ <i>Brassica</i> sp. for the pathogen <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>campestris</i> (Ishi vegetables method) ◆ Tomato (<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>) for the pathogens: <i>Clavibacter michiginensis</i> pv. <i>michiginensis</i> (Ishi-vegetables method), pepper mild mottle virus (Ishi vegetables method), <i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pv. <i>tomato</i> (CDFA method), tobacco mosaic virus, and tomatoc mosaic virus ◆ Lettuce (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>) for the pathogen lettuce mosaic virus (Ishi vegetables method) ◆ <i>Citrullus lanatus</i> and <i>Cucumis melo</i> var. <i>cantalupensis</i> for the pathogens: <i>Acidovorax avenae</i> spp. <i>citrulli</i> (seedling BioPCR) and <i>Acidovorax avenae</i> ssp. <i>citrulli</i> (seedling grow-out) ◆ Cucurbitacea for the pathogen <i>Didymella bryoniae</i> (Ishi vegetables method) ◆ Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) for the pathogens: <i>Alternaria dauci</i> (modified freeze blotter test) and <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>carotae</i> (modified see wash) ◆ <i>Phaseolus</i> spp. for the pathogen <i>Xanthomonas axonopodis</i> pv. <i>phaseoli</i> (Ishi selective media assay (2000)) 	08-05-2007
Idaho Crop Improvement Association 55 SW Fifth Avenue Meridian, Idaho 83642	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Phytosanitary field inspection of <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> and <i>Pisum sativum</i> ◆ Seed sampling for seed health laboratory testing 	07-22-2005
Illinois Crop Improvement Association 3105 Research Road Champaign, Illinois 61829	Phytosanitary field inspection for the following crops: <i>Zea mays</i> , <i>Triticum</i> spp., <i>Sorghum</i> spp., <i>Glycine max</i> , <i>Gossypium</i> spp., and <i>Helianthus annuus</i>	04-29-2005
Indiana Crop Improvement Association 7700 Stockwell Road Lafayette, Indiana 47909	Phytosanitary field inspection of <i>Zea mays</i>	07-23-2005

FIGURE 3-1-1: Accredited Entities for Seed Inspection

Accredited Facility Name	Accredited for	Expiration Date
Iowa State University Seed Testing Laboratory 127 Seed Science Center Ames, Iowa 5001	Seed health testing for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Corn (<i>Zea mays</i>) for the pathogens: <i>Chochliobolus carbonum</i>, <i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> ssp. <i>nebraskensis</i>, <i>Erwinia stewartii</i>, <i>Phomopsis/Diaporthes</i> ssp., <i>Pseudomonas syringae</i>, and <i>Stenocarpella maydis</i> ◆ Spinach (<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>) for the pathogen <i>Verticillium dahliae</i> 	06-16-2007
Nebraska Crop Improvement Association 267 Plant Science Hall P.O. Box 830911 Lincoln, Nebraska 68583	Phytosanitary field inspection of <i>Zea mays</i>	08-19-2005
Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. 7301 NW 62nd Avenue Johnston, Iowa 50131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Phytosanitary field inspection of <i>Zea mays</i> ◆ Visual seed inspection of field seed crops for phytosanitary inspection ◆ Seed sampling for seed health laboratory testing ◆ Laboratory seed health testing of <i>Zea mays</i> for the following pathogens: <i>Diplodia zeae</i>, <i>Cochliobolus carbonum</i>, <i>Cochliobolus heterostrophus</i>, <i>Ustilago maydis</i>/<i>Sphacelotheca reiliana</i>, <i>Sclerophthora sorphi</i>, <i>Gibberella zeae</i>, <i>Fusarium moniliforme</i>, <i>Penicillium oxalicum</i>, <i>Cercospora sorphi</i> var. <i>maydis</i>, <i>Kabatiella zeae</i>, <i>Phyllosticta maydis</i>, <i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> ssp. <i>nebraskensis</i>, <i>Erwinia stewartii</i>, mays dwarf mosaic virus, mays chlorotic mottle virus, and high plains virus 	08-06-2005
Professional Seed Research 7 South 437 Dugan Road Sugar Grove, Illinois 60554	Seed health testing of <i>Zea mays</i> for the following pathogens: <i>Diplodia zeae</i> , <i>Cochliololus carbonum</i> , <i>Cochliobolus heterostrophus</i> , <i>Usalago maydis</i> / <i>Spacelotheca reiliana</i> , <i>Clavibactor michiganensis</i> ssp. <i>nebraskensis</i> , and <i>Erwinia stewartii</i>	09-24-2005

FIGURE 3-1-1: Accredited Entities for Seed Inspection (continued)

Accredited Facility Name	Accredited for	Expiration Date
Seminis Inc. 2700 Camino Del Sol Oxnard, California 93030 Laboratory location: 37437 State Highway 16 Woodland, California 95695	Seed health testing for the following: ♦ <i>Bassica</i> sp. for the pathogen <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>campestris</i> ♦ Pepper and tomato for the pathogen <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>vesicatoria</i> ♦ Pepper for the pathogens: tobacco mosaic virus, tomato mosaic virus, pepper mild mottle virus ♦ Tomato for the pathogens: tobacco mosaic virus, tomato mosaic virus, pepper mild mottle virus, <i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> pv. <i>michiganensis</i> , <i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pv. <i>tomato</i> ♦ Lettus (<i>Latuca sativa</i>) for the pathogens: lettuce mosaic virus (<i>Ishi</i> test) and <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>vitians</i> ♦ Carrot (<i>Daucus</i> sp.) for the pathogen <i>Xanthomonas campestris</i> pv. <i>carotae</i> ♦ Melon and squash for the pathogen squash mosaic virus ♦ Melon and watermelon for the pathogen <i>Acidovorax avenae</i> pv. <i>citrulli</i> ♦ Cucumber for the pathogen <i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pv. <i>lachrymans</i> ♦ Watermelon, melon, cucumber, pumpkin, and squash for the pathogen <i>Didymella bryoniae</i>	12-05-2006

FIGURE 3-1-1: Accredited Entities for Seed Inspection (continued)

